DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 041 027 TE 001 950

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TITLE What to Do about Nonstandard Dialects: A Review of the Literature.
INSTITUTION Upper Midwest Regional Educational Lab., Inc., Minneapolis, Minn.
PUB DATE 15 Dec 69
NOTE 52p.

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$2.70
DESCRIPTORS American English, Dialects, *Dialect Studies, English Instruction, Language Handicaps, *Language Instruction, Language Research, Language Standardization, Language Usage, *Literature Reviews, *Nonstandard Dialects, Regional Dialects, Sociolinguistics, Standard Spoken Usage, Teacher Education, *Tenl

ABSTRACT

As part of the development of a self-teaching program for instructing teachers of English and elementary language arts about dialects, a comprehensive search of the literature on dialects and dialect learning, from 1960 to the present, was made. This paper sets forth some of the major ideas, points of view, and recommendations revealed by the review of the literature. Following a discussion of the responsibility of the schools in recognizing and accepting the varieties of the English language, the results of the review of the literature are reported in seven sections: (1) early research on "correcting" usage "errors," (2) descriptive dialect studies--regional, ethnic, and social, (3) studies of the effects of speaking a nonstandard dialect on learning to read, learning generally, job opportunities, and social status, (4) descriptions of current programs in augmenting dialects, (6) statements about what teachers need to know and do to deal effectively with the language of speakers of nonstandard dialects, and (7) research on teacher preparation and classroom practices involving language. An extensive bibliography and a glossary of terms used in the review are provided. (JM)

ED041027

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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WHAT TO DO ABOUT NONSTANDARD DIALECTS:

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

by

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December 15, 1969

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PREFACE

Early in 1969, the Upper Midwest Regional Educational Laboratory began planning a programmed, self-teaching program for instructing teachers of English and elementary language arts about dialects suggesting what, if anything, to do about the occurrence of nonstandard dialects in the speech of children.

As part of the development process, the Laboratory staff made a comprehensive search of the literature on dialects and dialect learning as a basis for setting a course of action. Much of the literature was scattered; much was contained in obscure, out-of-print and generally unavailable sources and much of it had to be summarized and reshaped in the light of a specific audience and purpose.

The following sections set forth some of the major ideas, points of view, and recommendations which were revealed by this review of the literature. It is offered as a means of helping others, closer to the "firing line," to learn what the Laboratory learned and to draw their own conclusions and courses of action.

For the Laboratory, this information has led to the preparation of a self-teaching program for inservice use which creates capability in teachers to understand ten basic concepts about dialects, to write broad phonetic transcriptions of "live" speech, to recognize and classify nonstandard utterances, to determine which utterances are critical matters for an individualized

curriculum for each child, and to select and store currently available teaching materials to apply to individual needs.

The inservice program is being tested at this time and will be refined and retested in hopes of making it available to school districts in September 1970.

INTRODUCTION

VARIETIES OF LANGUAGE

Everyone speaks a dialect, a variety of language. The language used is influenced by the speaker's age, sex, education, occuption, avocation, social class and regional and ethnic background. It is further influenced by social situations in which he usually operates. The complex interaction of these factors produces the individual's unique way of speaking, his idiolect. Fortunately, although no two people speak in exactly the same way, communication is possible through the sharing of more-or-less conventional phonetic, semantic, and grammatical systems in the language.

Standard English -- The phonetic, semantic, and grammatical patterns which are accepted and used by the majority of the educated English-speaking people in the United States form a series of regionally standard American English dialects. According to C.C. Fries, standard English, with its regional variations, is "the particular type of English which is used in the conduct of the important affairs of our people. It is also the type of English used by the socially acceptable of most of our communities and insofar as that is true, it has become a social or class dialect in the United States." (Fries, 1940, p. 13).

Variety in Standard English -- Standard English is not simply one formal level. It must be recognized that "standard English in any absolute sense, is a myth" (Cassidy, 1968, p. 375). One of the most definitive statements on the functional varieites to be found within standard English is that of John Kenyon (1963). He views

standard English as comprised of a broad spectrum of usages, subject to change, according to circumstance and over time. Because of this vast complexity, it is today thought fruitless to speak of "correct" usage. The tendency is now to speak of "appropriate" or "suitable" usage.

Nonstandard English --As will be seen from the following review of the literature, it is well-documented that many people do not speak any of the varieties of standard English. Those who do not are said to speak a nonstandard (not a sub-standard) dialect. Frequently those who speak a nonstandard dialect are the "disadvantaged" and those from ethnic groups.

Varieties of Language and the Responsibility of the Schools -- Educators and linguists have observed that these speakers of non-standard dialects often encounter learning difficulties due to the language barrier, and they may encounter social stigma and career handicaps. It is an inescapable fact that language patterns are persistent social markers, though the degree to which nonstandard language affects learning is not fully studied. Walter Loban, University of California, Berkeley, has stated that "unless they can learn to use standard English, many pupils will be denied access to economic opportunities or to entrance to many social groups" (Loban, 1966, p. 1). This sentiment has been reiterated by other educators including Muriel Crosby (1967), Robert Pooley (1967), Albert Kitzhaber (1967), and San-Su C. Lin (1967).

Representative of statements made by linguists is the comment of Harold Allen, University of Minnesota, who feels that many people are denied entrance to the Great Society "because they are handicapped socially, educationally, and vocationally through their restriction to nonstandard varieties of English" (Allen, 1967, p. 6). This is essentially the view of linguists Raven McDavid (g. 1969), William Labov (b. 1968, g. 1964), Davenport Plumer (1968), William A. Stewart (c. 1967), Lee Pederson (1964), and many others.

Professional organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of English, the Center for Applied Linguistics, and various Project English Centers and Curriculum Development Centers throughout the country have expressed similar concern.

Many linguists, particularly sociolinguists, have expressed concern over the need for public recognition of and acceptance of nonstandard dialect.

There are a few linguists and educators who do not feel that anything need be done with speakers of nonstandard dialects other than helping the society recognize and accept the nonstandard dialects. The most vocal of this group is James Sledd, Northwestern University, who puts forth strongly-stated arguments against tampering with the student's dialect (Sledd, 1965). Likewise Kaplan feels that standard English is too often taught as a "vehicle for assimilation and standardization of the individual within the culture" (Kaplan, 1969, p. 388). He questions whether this is a desirable goal. Davenport Plumer also comments on the "moral" question of whether schools ought to attempt to teach a standard dialect (Plumer, 1968).

Augmentation as the Objective -- A search of the literature reveals, however, that the majority of educators and linguists who have written on the topic do feel that it is the responsibility of the schools not only to recognize and accept nonstandard dialects, but also to attempt to add certain crucial elements of standard English to the language resources of the speaker of a nonstandard dialect. The process of adding to is called augmentation. A publication of the NCTE Curriculum Commission, 1966, states: "The large part of the profession holds that the school can, and must, exert influence to modify the oral and written usage of children and youth. At the least, children must learn about and possibly use a variety of levels of language suitable to differing circumstances (Ends and Issues, 1966, pp. 8-9). A more recent NCTE publication states ". . . the responsibility falls upon the teacher of the language arts to provide a person instruction in the standard English of the region if every citizen in the community is to be able to fulfill his potentials" (Nonstandard Dialect, p. 1). The statement made by Harold Allen again seems to be representative of the feelings of most linguists and educators that augmentation, not deletion or "correction", is the most fruitful approach to take with speakers of nonstandard dialect:

> Although there are still those persons who seem to advocate a ruthless replacement of the nonstandard variety by standard, the weight of evidence from psychology and linguistics as well as from the related discipline of the teaching of English as a second language, argues rather that standard English should be taught to these people as a second dialect without prejudice to their first dialect. The goal is addition, not substitution (Allen, 1967, p. 6).

Similar statements are found in the writings of Loban (1966 & 1968), McDavid (b. 1967), Stewart (a. 1964 and c. 1967), Pederson (d. 1965), Lloyd (1963), Pooley (1960), Higgins (1960), and San-Su C. Lin (1967). Augmentation is also the approach recommended by the NCTE Task Force for the Disadvantaged (Language Programs for the Disadvantaged, 1965).

The Upper Midwest Regional Educational Laboratory concurs with the view of augmentation held by the majority of linguists and educators. Research evidence and the opinions of skilled observers indicates that it is undesirable (and perhaps impossible) to pursue a course of "deletion" or "correction" of nonstandard dialect patterns. The objective, from the Lab's perspective, is to enlarge the student's linguistic resources for his use in the varieties of social and economic situations with which he must deal and to acknowledge that his home dialect has real and important usefulness to him.

OVERVIEW OF THE LITERATURE REVIEWED

The existing literature on dialect/usage is extensive. To facilitate discussion of the wide variety of literature reviewed, seven arbitrary divisions have been made. There is much overlap in these divisions.

1. Early research on "correcting" usage "errors."
2. Descriptive dialect studies -- regional, ethnic, and social.
3. Studies of the effect of speaking a nonstandard dialect on learning to read, learning generally, job opportunities, and social status.
4. Descriptions of the success of programs on general language development and on specific aspects of dialect.
5. Descriptions of current programs in augmenting dialects.

6. Statements about what teachers need to know and do to deal effectively with the language of speakers of non-standard dialects.

7. Research on teacher preparation and classroom practices involving language.

The literature reviewed in this report is limited in several respects. It deals primarily with the language of native speakers of English in grades K-12, not with speakers of foreign languages nor with pre-school children or adults. It is limited to the literature from 1960 to the present, with a few notable exceptions. The concentration is on aspects of lexicon, usage, pronunciation, and grammar. Only representative studies are specifically described. Other studies, similar in design and results, may be found in the bibliography. Finally, attention has been focused primarily on the pedagogical devices for augmenting dialects.

A glossary of the terms used in this report is found in Appendix A. The terms defined include: dialect, functional variety of usage, grammar, idiolect, language, lexicon, linguistics, morphology, nonstandard English, phonology, prestige dialect, regional dialect, social dialect, syntax, standard English, and usage.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

"CORRECTING" USAGE "ERRORS"

The historical view of dialect differences was that they were "errors" that needed to be "corrected." The studies which have been done on the efficacy of "correcting" usage "errors" via the traditional means of formal grammatical study are numerous and fairly conclusive. Too many studies have been conducted to report here. The most revealing and concise statement made on the subject is found in The Encyclopedia of Educational Research

which summarizes the research done up to 1960: "Summaries of research in the teaching of language have consistently concluded that there is no shred of evidence to substantiate the continued emphasis on grammar prevalent in most classrooms" (Searles and Carlson, 1958).

A share of the responsibility for the ineffectiveness of the past practices of "correcting" usage "errors" must be taken by textbooks. One observer has said, "About nine-tenths of the statements about language in the textbooks disregard what people say. . . . Textbooks are full of dream-world statements about what things might be like if only English-speaking people would shape up -- if they would quit using English the way they do and start using it some other way" (Bostain, 1966, p. 20). Similar criticisms of textbooks based on analytical studies have been made by Carroll (1963), Malmstrom (1959), Womack (1959), and Pooley (Ends and Issues, 1966, p. 46).

On the other hand, research has provided some evidence that the "linguistic" approach to studying language -- the objective, descriptive, predictive approach -- in a framework of transformational grammar does seem to be effective. Most of this research has dealt with the improvement of writing skills (Bateman and Zidonis, 1966), (White, 1964), (Zidonis, 1965), and (Mellon, 1968) but not with spoken English.

DESCRIPTIVE DIALECT STUDIES

Linguistic Analysis -- Descriptive studies analyze the language used in terms of the specific elements of the language which show variation -- phonology, morphology, and syntax. Almost all the research reported under regional, ethnic, and social dialect studies concentrates heavily on the phonologic or syntactic aspect of dialect. Labov, for example, concentrates very heavily on phonology as the variable in all his studies.

Three Over-Lapping Aspects of Descriptive Dialect Studies -- Descriptive dialect studies have been conducted on several aspects of dialect: regional, ethnic, and social. Obviously these three aspects are interrelated; the artificial distinction drawn between them in this report has been made for ease of discussion. The interrelation of these three aspects may be seen in the contrastive studies of standard and nonstandard English which have been done. Most of the studies conclude that the nonstandard dialects are well-ordered, highly structured, highly developed language systems (Baratz, 1968), (Labov, d. 1966), and (McDavid a. 1965, g. 1969 and h. 1968). Descriptions have been given of the various distinct linguistic features of the dialects studied in an attempt to provide accurate and useful data for educational programs. A cautionary word must be stated at this point: The data are not yet complete. Further investigation is needed; and since language is dynamic and constantly changing, it is doubtful if it is strictly possible for the data ever to be "complete."

Regional Dialect Studies -- The study of regional dialects has been going on for several decades and is perhaps the study about which there is the least controversy. The linguistic atlases are comprehensive field studies of regional varieties in language which have focused principally on phonology and lexicon. A new project summarizing the many studies of regional dialects is the undertaking of a Dictionary of American Regional English which concentrates on lexicon rather than on phonology (Cassidy, 1968).

Materials for the schools which describe regional variations have been developed by Roger Shuy, Discovering American Dialects, Jean Malmstrom, Dialects, U.S.A., and the University of Minnesota Project English Center (1968).

Ethnic Dialect Studies -- Study of the particular variations found in the speech of given ethnic groups is a more recent phenomenon and has provided much useful information. Studies of the speech of the Mexican-American have been done by Hernandez (1968) and by Kopp (1967). The speech of the Puerto Rican has been examined by Labov (c. 1965).

Most ethnic study- however, has been focused on the speech of the Negro, particularly the linguistic features of Negro nonstandard dialects.

The author, title and date of some of the more significant studies are found in Appendix B.

Considerable controversy has centered on the question of whether the Negro nonstandard speaker is delayed in language development.

Joan Baratz has sought to dispel what she calls some of the current "myths" about Negro speech (Baratz, 1968). She stresses that although the dialect of the Negro is distinct and is different from standard English, it is not defective nor inferior. This is a commonly held view among most linguists -- the black dialect is different, not defective. Other "myths" that Baratz discounts are the doctrine of genetic inferiority, the social pathology theory which describes the Negro as a "sick white man," the linguistic incompetence theory that Negro speakers are virtually destitute, and the theory that the speech of the Negro is a deterent to cognitive growth. All of these "myths" have been found in print and many have had an effect on teaching practices in the past years.

Baratz and Povich (1967) studied the language development of a group of black Head Start children and found that: "the Negro Head Start child is not delayed in language acquisition -- the majority of his utterances

are on the kernel and transformational levels. . ." This applies not lack of a language but the mastery of a somewhat different language.

Social Dialect Studies -- Like the study of ethnic dialect, the study of social dialect is of recent origin. The bulk of the studies has been concentrated on lower socio-economic groups of all ethnic and racial origins but they have focused, understandably, on populations of speakers from minority ethnic groups and on the language of the "disadvantaged" urban dwellers.

One of the most comprehensive and significant of these studies was that done by William Labov and reported in The Social Stratification of English in New York City. This study clearly illustrates the procedures which sociolinguists need to follow, how the data should be analyzed, and what sociolinguists ought to be looking for.

Other studies following Labov's lead have been conducted or are in process by Shuy and others in Detroit, Johnson in Los Angeles, Fasold and others in Washington, and Davis and others in Chicago. Limited studies have been done in Minneapolis by Lee Pederson and others.

The authors, titles, and dates of several significant social dialect studies are listed in Appendix B. Most of these studies are restricted to limited geographic areas and include different ethnic groups. Generally the studies conclude that social variations in language do exist and that certain features can be identified.

Standard English -- Several contrastive studies have concerned themselves with all three aspects (regional, ethnic, and social) of standard English. They have looked at all aspects of nonstandard English rather

than any one specific aspect (Loban, 1966). Three studies provided information on the differences between nonstandard dialects and standard English (Templin, 1957; Thomas, 1962; and Loban, 1966). All three reported that verb usage was the most frequent source of grammatical variation from standard English. Any of the studies mentioned above also would be pertinent to the discussion of the differences between nonstandard dialects and standard English.

Semantics and Dialect Study -- A few studies suggest that perhaps the greatest cause of communication difficulty is in the lexicon -- or in semantics. Kaplan for example feels that phonologic and syntactic variations are not significant in number, are not racially identified, and are not major impediments to communication. He feels they are merely surface manifestations of deeper separations at the cognitive level. He concludes: "It may be that the significant differences between 'standard' and 'nonstandard' dialect lie in the area of cognition rather than in the areas of phonology or syntax" (Kaplan, 1969, p. 388). Donald Lloyd, after an analytic study of the English of the central city, says that the language contains many different terms for the same thing and that the differences are sub-cultural in origin (Lloyd, 1963, p. 40).

Entwisle also found that "there are far-reaching differences in semantic structures between Negro and white disadvantaged children . . . differences in semantics may be of much greater importance than lags in development" (Entwisle and Greenberger, 1968).

EFFECTS OF SPEAKING NONSTANDARD DIALECT

Much research suggests that speaking a nonstandard dialect may be detrimental to its speakers in language development, in school learning, in reading, in securing a job, and in achieving desired social status.

Regarding language development, Hubbard and Zarate (1967) in a review of progress in Head Start programs, report that "the culturally disadvantaged child is usually verbally deficient with respect to society as a whole." The question as to whether this is an effect of using nonstandard dialect or of being disadvantaged is not discussed. Bernstein observed that "the language usually spoken by members of lower-class society restricts structural organization in sentences as well as syntactical flexibility" (Green, 1965). Bernstein goes beyond verbal behavior to cognitive functioning in general. In three different studies, Entwisle showed the ultimate handicap is language development in the disadvantaged child (Entwisle a. 1967, b. 1967, and c 1967). She felt that the first-to-third grade decline in the relative position of the slum child compared with the non-slum child paralleled the failure of these children to become literate. Plumer (1968) reports that four investigations have provided some evidence that poor children have generally limited vocabularies. Plumer also describes the findings of Bernstein and Bereiter who both feel that the language development of the "disadvantaged" is severely limited.

Many linguists are disenchanted with the notion of deficient development of language among speakers of nonstandard English. They assert that the studies and discussions on the language development of children should be considered from a point of view similar to the one expressed by Baratz, that the language development of the speaker of nonstandard English is <u>not</u> deficient nor inferior -- it is merely different.

Research on reading in relation to nonstandard English does show that the speaker of nonstandard dialects faces an extreme difficulty in learning to read a dialect which in many respects is almost a foreign language to him. Difficulties encountered in reading by speakers of nonstandard dialects are described and discussed by Baratz and Shuy (1960), Broz (1966), Davis (1967), Fasold (1969), Goodman (1969), Lloyd (1963), McDavid (d. 1969), Shuy (e. 1969), Stewart (b. 1968), Wolfram and Fasold (1969), and Labov (e. 1969).

Another area in which the speaker of a nonstandard dialect may be handicapped is in understanding spoken standard English. Lane and others (1967) determined that some aspects of the Negro dialect lead to differences in perception of spoken messages. Speakers of the southern Negro dialect were less accurate when attempting to understand or comprehend standard English than were Caucasian students from the same geographic area and of the same social and economic level. In school a child could be severely handicapped by such differences; in a democracy, where the democratic processes are conducted largely in standard English, such a handicap could have serious consequences.

The relation between the dialect spoken and employability was investigated to provide an empirical basis for the Job Corps speech training programs (Gropper et al, 1967). This study found that: (1) there are critical speech skills that differentiate between the employable and the non-employable and (2) that 3/4 of Job Corpsmen have deficiencies in one or more such skills. This program replaced textbook standards of speech adequacy with standards set by employers as the basis for instruction -- an interesting innovation.

Putnam and O'Hern have provided evidence that features of nonstandard dialect are negatively evaluated by standard speakers (1955). In a pre-

publication manuscript, Walter A. Wolfram (1969) stresses the sociological importance of dialects and how to approach language which is "socially obtrusive." He states that a primary purpose for teaching standard English is to allow students to use language which is not "socially stigmatized." Wolfram distinguishes between linguistic features with "sharp" stratification[1] and those with "gradient" stratification.[2] He concludes that the features with "sharp stratification" are of more social significance and need to be treated first in school programs. His study of nonstandard language further reveals that grammatical features tend to show "sharp stratification" and phonological features tend to show "gradient stratification." Therefore, more attention needs to be given to grammatical features than to phonological features.

It appears from observation and limited research that speakers of nonstandard dialects are (or may be) hindered in language development, in progress in school, in learning to read, in job seeking, and in efforts to achieve desired social status.

SUCCESS OF PROGRAMS IN TEACHING STANDARD DIALECT

The number of completed studies dealing with the success of specific pedagogical approaches to dialect study and improvement of language skills is quite limited. A few studies are in progress, but are not as yet complete. The research which has been done on specific practices seems to indicate the advantage of oral practice. Loban, for example, found that oral drill was more effective than workbook drill (Loban, 1966, p. 56). The NCTE has also asserted that "research supports the efforts of teachers who approach usage change through oral means" (Ends and Issues, 1966, p. 9).

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[1] Generally, limited to one social class

[2] Occurring in all social classes (i.e., cutting across social class lines)

Studies on the Efficacy of Oral Work in Increasing General Language Development -- Many studies have been done on general language development and the role played by oral work. Only a few of the more representative studies are discussed; others may be found in the bibliography.

Marion Blank (1967), in a short range study, investigated the cognitive gains in "deprived" children through individual teaching of language for abstract thinking and found a rapid, marked gain in IQ for the experimental group. John L. Carter (1967) looked at the long range effects of a linguistic stimulation program upon Negro educationally disadvantaged first-grade children and found "very" significant gains by the experimental group in IQ, mental age, and language age, but no difference in reading ability.

Project Head Start findings show that Project Head Start participants display greater oral language development than non-Head Start participants (Daniel and Giles, 1966).

New York's Higher Horizons Program concentrated on the broadening of experiences for the culturally disadvantaged child. There was an improvement in the children's language, in their attitude toward school, and a significant increase in reading scores (Green, 1965, p. 732).

The Detroit Improvement Program is similar to the Higher Horizon's program in that both seek to raise the aspiration level of the children and both concentrate on oral skills. The auditory approach used in the Detroit Improvement Program has led to consistent gains in all categories of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills with the exception of the sub-test on capitalization (Green, 1965, p. 732).

Studies on Treatment of Specific Aspects of Dialect -- Clark, et. al (1967) tested the effectiveness of a training program to improve speech and found that speech training is related to significant improvement in general speech effectiveness and in specific linguistic features assumed to be characteristic of nonstandard aspects of Negro dialect.

A study done by Ruth Golden in Detroit explored the oral language problems of the "culturally different child." The program attempted to modify nonstandard language through taped lessons. The study found that positive changes in writing, speech, and self-esteem were possible. The experimental group which used the tapes did almost twice as well as the control group (significant at the .01 level).

San-Su C. Lin (1964) experimented for three years using pattern practice to help well-motivated southern Negro college students with standard English in speaking and writing. Her tentative conclusions included the statement: "pattern practice, used properly, can provide an answer to the dialect problem." She says that the "student must become keenly aware of the differences between standard and dialect usages." The most success was observed in increasing the students' awareness of their language problems and in giving them the learning techniques and the self-confidence needed for further growth.

CURRENT PROGRAMS IN AUGMENTING DIALECT

The major emphasis in current programs to augment the dialect of nonstandard speakers is on beginning with the speaker's own language and building further competence from there. This is stressed in most of the programs and by several linguists and educators including Loban (1966), Smiley (1965), Allen (1967), and Crosby (1966).

The essence of most of the current programs is summarized in a statement made by J.N. Hook, University of Illinois, in speaking of the English language program for the Seventies:

> As English becomes more universal, so does the oral-aural method of teaching it. In United States classrooms, children practice orally those patterns they need, experiment with word order, and gain a knowledge of sentence structure. Usage is approached largely through oral practice, with attention given to the understanding of dialects which differ according to the geography, time, prestige, and etiquette of the situation . . . Classroom methods stress attention to the individual and wide but selective use of programmed materials (Hook, 1967).

Most of the programs follow the findings of research and stress the oral aspect of language learning. Oral games are described by Barrows (1956), Slager (1962), and Bereiter and Engelmann (ERIC). The use of tapes is quite common in experimental programs of teaching a standard dialect (Golden, 1962; Lin, 1964; Loman, 1967; and Smiley, 1965). Pattern practice, already proven to be a promising approach, is currently being used by several educators (Lin, 1964; Barrows, 1956; Anthony and Gross; and Smiley 1965). Some but not all of the techniques used in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL) are also applicable to the teaching of standard English to speakers of nonstandard dialects as has been pointed out by McDavid (g. 1969).

Role playing is yet another oral approach to dialect learning (Lin, 1968). Other oral approaches to language learning are reading scripts for short one-act plays, telephone conversations, language laboratories, and the making of recordings (Plumer, 1968).

Some current programs being carried on by individuals include the use of slang (Heiman, 1967) and enrichment through radio (ES 001 575).

Speech therapy has been used in the treatment of dialect-related speech and hearing problems in California (ES 001 933).

The approach to understanding and augmenting dialect apparently need not be limited solely to oral practices. Much is also being done in writing exercises and in the study of literature (Lin, 1967, and Steele, 1963).

There are other programs which are still in the developmental stage but which hold promise upon completion. Irwin Feigenbaum has produced a tested oral pattern practice and discrimination program for the Center for Applied Linguistics, but no report has been issued yet. The Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and Washington schools are currently writing and testing materials oriented toward the problems of the nonstandard speaker in learning standard speech.

CURRENT PROGRAMS ABOUT DIALECT

Other programs about dialect -- that is, information for students and teachers -- have been developed by curriculum study centers to help teachers and students learn about dialects. These include Gateway English materials from Hunter College; the materials of the Oregon Curriculum Study Center which include a test on the varieties of English, a unit on using the dictionary, and a usage manual; the Indiana University English Curriculum Study Series which includes several teaching units on language including one specificially on dialect; the University of Georgia materials on usage and dialect; and the University of Minnesota Project English Center's language materials, including two units which deal specifically with dialect.

WHAT THE TEACHER NEEDS TO KNOW AND DO

Statements on what teachers need to know about dialect have been made, among others, by the College Entrance Examination Board (Freedom and Discipline in English, 1965) and by the English Teacher Preparation Study (NCTE) which provides a list of comprehensive guidelines for teacher preparation (Viall, 1967). The Illinois State-wide Curriculum Center for the Preparation of Secondary School Teachers of English (ISCPET) has stated that minimal knowledge of language would include "a knowledge of the present standards of educated usage; knowledge of the various levels of usage and how those levels are determined." Good knowledge of language, says ISCPET, would include: "A thorough knowledge of levels of usage; some knowledge of dialectology, a realization of the cultural implications of both" (Classic Statements, 1968).

The necessity for the teacher to know about dialect has been stressed by English educators and linguists for some time. If the findings of research are to be utilized and if current programs which seem to be successful are to be implemented on a larger scale, it is held essential that teachers of English possess certain knowledges and skills. A synthesis of those recommendations are as follows:

First, teachers must recognize and accept variety in language, that is, they must be objective about dialects. This has been emphasized by a multitude of educators and linguists including Allen (1968), the NCTE (Nonstandard Dialect), and Loflin (1967). Teachers must accept the fact that regional, social, and ethnic dialects are normal and natural variations of language (Cassidy, 1968). Some sources about variety in dialect which are extensively cited in the literature on dialects include Malmstrom's

Dialects U.S.A.; Shuy's Discovering American Dialects; Reed's Dialects of American English; Loban's Problems in Oral English; Joos' The Five Clocks; two publications of the NCTE: Social Dialects and Language Learning and Non-Standard Dialects; and two articles by McDavid "American Social Dialects" and "Sense and Nonsense About American Dialects."

Second, teachers must understand the facts about standard English and relieve themselves of myths about "shall" and "will" and other niceties. They should also be familiar with accurate descriptions of nonstandard dialects. For example, it may be of help to the teacher to understand that one of the most crucial differences of the Negro nonstandard speaker is his use of unusual forms of the verb TO BE which convey distinctions that are not efficiently possible in standard. Several authoritative descriptions are available (Allen, 1968; Plumer, 1968; Lin, 1967; Loflin, 1967, and Stewart, 1964). There are also several lists available which identify crucial and frequent language differences. Appendix C contains lists of nonstandard features compiled by Wolfram, Labov, Baratz, Shuy, Williamson, Hernandez, McDavid, Loban, Garvey and McFarlane, as well as the list from Nonstandard Dialect.

Third, teachers must be able to augment the nonstandard language patterns of their students. The crucial importance of this has already been stressed in the "Introduction" of this report. Evidence of the handicaps encountered by speakers of nonstandard dialects and several approaches to augmenting nonstandard language patterns have already been discussed. One

further program designed to augment nonstandard language patterns has been developed for speakers in New York City and is described in Nonstandard Dialect. Portions of this program are outlined in Appendix D. Other pedagogical suggestions are to be found in Appendix D, including statements of needed concepts, basic linguistic knowledge required, goals, and one example of a specific teaching problem in nonstandard Negro English.

TEACHER PREPARATION AND ACTUAL PRACTICES

It seems apparent that teacher preparation has not thus far adequately provided the background needed for dialect study which was set forth in the preceding section. A study conducted by the NCTE and reported in The National Interest and the Teaching of English several years ago clearly points out the deficiencies existing in the language preparation of both elementary and secondary school teachers. This study concluded that their preparation was "grievously deficient." A follow-up study conducted in 1964 found the situation still very inadequate.

This criticism of teacher preparation has been widely repeated. Perhaps the best summary of this early criticism is found in the following statement:

> In considering the total problems of language study, we face our own appalling ignorance of the subject. Few preparing for teaching in our college courses have studied even traditional English grammar, much less the history of language, lexicography, semantics, English dialects, and similar related concerns. With only 40% of all English majors reasonably educated about language, with most elementary teachers possessing absolutely no formal work in language except what can be squeezed into a general curriculum course, the profession has before it an enormous program of re-education (WCTE, 1963, pp. 9-10).

A search of the literature substantiates this criticism of the modern scene. With the many programs which have shown themselves to be successful in augmentation of nonstandard dialects and with the extensive study that has been done of dialect, standard and nonstandard English, one would expect that great headway in dialect study would be taking place in the schools. Such has not been the case however:

> Linguistic scholars have developed an extensive body of knowledge (information and concepts) about language, and a quantity of reliable information is available to the mature student of language. Little of this body of knowledge or of its implications to the English language has penetrated the secondary school curriculum. . . Information long known to linguists has had little influence on attitudes and instructional techniques of teachers. . . Information about language known to psychologists, philosophers, and anthropologists has had even less impact on the high school curriculum (University of Minnesota Project English Center, 1968).

James Squire (1966, p. 615) found this to be the case in his study of high school English programs. He comments that "We should like to report instruction that reflects recent developments in language -- in structural and generative grammar, in lexicography, dialects, or the history of the language -- but awareness of a language program in this sense, for most schools, seems still a thing of the future."

These studies reveal that English teachers do NOT possess the necessary information about language, specifically about dialect and usage. Womack came to the "final and disquieting conclusion that English usage is still in chaos" (Womack, 1959). He found that the majority of the teachers still reject most usages that published information tends to support as acceptable. The study also revealed that few teachers had taken course work in linguistic science or were familiar with basic works in linguistics. Pooley found that there was no agreement among English teachers about

English usage despite a thirty-year backlog of linguistic evidence on the topic (Pooley, 1967, p. 743). Similar findings were reported in a study of "The Language Attitudes and Beliefs of Minnesota Elementary and High School Teachers of English" which gives evidence that "a large number of Minnesota elementary and secondary teachers do not have informed attitudes and beliefs about the English language. . . both elementary and secondary teachers still have much to learn about the English language and language study (Hess, 1968).

San-Su C. Lin (1967) in "Disadvantaged Student or Disadvantaged Teacher?" points out that while some students may not have an adequate understanding and control of standard English, too many of their teachers know very little about (much less accept) nonstandard English. She stresses that both are in a sense "disadvantaged."

SUMMARY

Linguistic scholarship has begun to particularize the obvious fact that all people speak dialects and that each dialect has regular observable features. The related observable fact that some dialects are preferred in social and occupational contexts is being studied, though it is not at this time fully understood how and to what degree speakers of standard English respond to utterances of nonstandard speakers.

The mandate to the schools to provide students with the means of social mobility, including control of standard English, is well established and widely accepted despite the current protestations of some persons that, since all dialects are equally respectable, the school has no business teaching standard English to speakers of nonstandard.

On the other hand, though schools accept the task of teaching standard English, the sensitivities among minority groups demand a new and humane basis for the teacher's actions: namely the understanding that standard English is taught not because it is "correct," but because it is a socially, educationally, and vocationally useful dialect. This requirement forces reorientation of the teacher from an absolutist to a relativistic attitude toward language, an orientation which may be contrary to deeply held views in the value system of most teachers.

It is widely held, though as yet unproven, that this relativistic view of language will arise as teachers and students gain more knowledge about the nature of dialects, particularly nonstandard dialects, in social and historical perspective. It has been repeatedly observed that teachers are singularly uninformed about the nature of dialects (and language in general), and much needs to be done about informing teachers.[1]

1 UMREL's Inservice Training Package, "Backgrounds in Language" will be distributed on sale and rental basis to local school districts beginning June 1970 by the National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, Illinois 61820.

Knowing about dialects is only part of the answer, however; what the teacher is to do in the classroom is even more pressing as a problem. The supply of needed learning technologies for augmenting (adding to) the student's repertoire of linguistic choices, is, at present, weak but developing. Current practices in usage correction/ augmentation appear to be largely fruitless. Research over a half century points to the lack of bearing of formal study of grammar on the problem. Written blank-filling usage exercises, another common method, appear rather fruitless, particularly for the nonstandard speaker, though little direct research has been done on the effectiveness of the technique.

Linguists, in addition to characterizing the speech of ethnic and social dialect groups, have begun to develop dialect training systems, largely based on oral-aural techniques, spawned by methods of teaching English to speakers of other language (TESOL). Experimental work in altering nonstandard speech through such oral-aural means has been promising but not conclusive, and teachers, especially teachers of ghetto children, do not know what, if anything, they should do.

CONCLUSIONS

Usage is obviously an individual problem; no two speakers vary from standard English in precisely the same way or to the same degree. Learning standard English should be, accordingly, conducted on an individual basis. While it can be argued that individual circumstances (aspirations, job opportunities, geographical situation) also create variety in the need for individuals to control standard English, the egalitarian concept of opportunity demands that students have opportunity to learn to control standard English even though their precise future need is not known.

The Upper Midwest Regional Educational Laboratory will seek ways to prepare teachers to make more effective, individualized use of materials that are now available and to be ready for new systems of augmenting the speech of nonstandard speakers. Through appropriate means, the Laboratory will produce skills in teachers which will enable them (1) to recognize and transcribe nonstandard utterances accurately, (2) to characterize those differences sensitively and knowledgeably, (3) to create an individual dialect/usage curriculum for each student, (4) and to organize (i.e. "bank") present materials so that they might be used efficiently in individualized programs of instruction.

Components of knowledge will be introduced into the training program to facilitate understanding of the nature of dialect (and to some degree, language in general), to create a capacity to choose dialect curriculum materials intelligently, and to prepare teachers to continue to learn about dialect through reading, listening, and discussing teaching practices.

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APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY

DIALECT: A dialect is a variety of language which consists of characteristic lexical, phonological, and grammatical patterns shared by a group of speakers. (See functional variety of usage, prestige dialect, regional dialect, social dialect).

FUNCTIONAL VARIETY OF USAGE: Linguistic observation reveals that speakers of English, both standard and nonstandard dialect speakers, move from one variety of language to another according to the context of the speech situation and the speaker's purpose. Five such varieties have been identified for standard English. These are (ranged from most formal to least formal): literary, formal, informal, casual, and intimate. (For an informative discussion of this concept see The Five Clocks by Joos.)

GRAMMAR: Grammar is (1) the scientific analysis or (2) the systematic description of the structures used in a language, or (3) the body of rules accounting for such structures. Grammar is distinct from mechanics and usage.

IDIOLECT: The individual's unique way of speaking--the variety of language resulting from the complex interaction of the speaker's age, sex, education, occupation, avocation, social class, and regional and ethnic background--is called his idiolect.

LANGUAGE: A language is normally composed of a set of dialects which share the main features of the language but which differ to some degree in aspects of phonology, grammar, and lexicon.

"Language is a dynamic system of learned, conventional, oral symbols held in common by members of some community, used by individual members of the society for the conduct of relatively precise patterns of human interaction." (University of Minnesota Project English Center)

LEXICON: The lexicon of a language is its word stock, i.e. the words comprising the vocabulary of the language. The compilation of this word stock, as done by lexicographers, is contained in dictionaries.

LINGUISTICS: Linguistics is the scientific study of language. The term linguistics may be used to describe information derived from this scientific study of language.

MORPHOLOGY: Morphology is the subdivision of grammar which deals with the structure of words. Included within this study are the rules for the addition of prefixes and suffixes to word roots.

NONSTANDARD ENGLISH: Nonstandard English refers to dialects which differ from the regional standard in pronunciation, vocabulary, and/or grammar. Nonstandard dialects are, most frequently, regionally variant types of speech spoken by in-migrant groups. Such dialects may contain features characteristic of less prestigious social and economic levels in a community, and often they are sustained as dialects by ghetto circumstances.

PHONOLOGY: Phonology is the study of the sounds of a language or a dialect.

PRESTIGE DIALECT: As the name implies, a prestige dialect is the dialect admired by speakers of other dialects. These are the dialects preferred and used by educated and influential persons in each region. For social and economic reasons, these prestige dialects are normally the standard dialects for that particular region in which they are spoken.

REGIONAL DIALECT: A regional dialect is the variety of language spoken in one part of the general territory of a given language. A regional dialect may have several socio-economic varieties. (See social dialect).

SOCIAL DIALECT: Social dialects, sometimes called class dialects, are those dialects spoken by members of different socio-economic groups within a given geographic territory (or regional dialect area).

SYNTAX: Syntax is that part of grammar which deals with the structure of word groups. It is concerned primarily with the study of the structure of the sentence.

STANDARD ENGLISH: The phonetic, semantic, and grammatical patterns which are accepted and used by the majority of the educated English speaking people in the United States form a series of regionally standard American English dialects.

According to C.C. Fries, standard English is "The particular type of English which is used in the conduct of the important affairs of our people. It is also the type of English used by the socially acceptable of most of our communities and, insofar as that is true, it has become a social or class dialect in the U.S."

USAGE: Usage is the set of relationships between certain nonlinguistic factors and the forms of language. The study of usage deals with words, sounds, and grammatical forms of a language and the way these are customarily used.

Robert Pooley defines usage as "the application of external social values to language in specific situations. . . subject to the varieties and changes to be expected in human value situations."

An individual's usage is extremely complex because there are several factors influencing it besides custom: the speaker's age, sex, economic status, cultural background, education, and purpose; the size and characteristics of his audience; and the occasion for speaking. (See idiolect).

APPENDIX B

SELECTED REFERENCES ON NONSTANDARD DIALECTS*

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APPENDIX C

LISTS OF DIALECT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN STANDARD AND NONSTANDARD ENGLISH

Descriptive Lists

Wolfram (Negro)
Labov (Negro)
Baratz (Negro)
Shuy (Negro)
Williamson (Negro)
Hernandez (Mexican-American)
McDavid (General)

Pedagogical Lists

Loban
Garvey and McFarlane
Pooley
Nonstandard Dialect (pp. 5-15)

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APPENDIX D

PEDAGOGICAL SUGGESTIONS

"Needed Concepts" -- Pooley

"Basic Linguistic Knowledge" -- Jacobs

"Concepts and Goals" -- NCTE

Program of Instruction -- NCTE

"Example of Teaching Proglem in Nonstandard Negro English" -- Loflin

From Robert C. Pooley, "Teaching Usage Today and Tomorrow," English Journal, December, 1968.

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